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Google SiteMaps – Get ALL Your Pages Listed!

By Robert Fuess

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Spiderweb Logic
<http://www.spiderweblogic.com/>

Google has a new trick! Don't get left behind! It's the hottest thing since RSS. I was working on my Google AdWords campaign for <http://www.SchoolAndTeacher.com> and I noticed that Google had a new feature called "Google Sitemap". It was a perfect fit with my needs. I was concerned with how deep Google would be able to get into my site. Teachers are able to have homework posted daily on my site but will Google see the daily changes? Now they can. When a new teacher signs up, how many months will it be before Google recognizes it? With Google Sitemap, Google can be informed about new pages quickly and when a page last changed.

If you have a website and want Google to know about ALL the pages in your site, build a Google Sitemap. That's it. Keep reading, since I will show you how to do so, and where it proves most useful. Webmasters (like me) have been frustrated by the slow methodological way in which Google gradually finds the pages in your site. If your site starts out big and has a lot of dynamic pages, then this is unacceptable. Hurray for Google! They are listening.

Many webmasters like using DHTML menus, but are concerned about the search engines finding all the pages. This will help Google to find them. (In reality, I would still recommend having a regular site-map to help the other search engines find the rest of your pages. Google may drive the most traffic but customers coming in through any search engine are welcome. Don't throw this away.)

DO WE KEEP OUR OLD SITE MAPS?

Yes! The Google Sitemap is not useful to your normal human user just to Google. (It is in XML format,

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not HTML.) Also remember that other search engines (like Yahoo and MSN) don't use this type of site map yet. Hopefully they will.

WHAT DOES A GOOGLE SITEMAP LOOK LIKE?

It is XML. For XML gurus, here is the schema:

<http://www.google.com/schemas/sitemap/0.84/sitemap.xsd>.

But if you are new to XML, here is a sample. I will go through it. Don't let the tags scare you.

<http://www.SchoolAndTeacher.com/OneClass.aspx?ClassId=1>

2005-7-4
monthly
0.7

<http://www.SchoolAndTeacher.com/OneClass.aspx?ClassId=2>
2005-7-1
monthly
0.5

EXPLANATION OF TAGS:

This should be at the top of the document. It states that this is an XML document and what version of XML is being used.

This tag is the wrapper for all the URLs in the sitemap. Just copy it from the full example above. If you are new to XML, don't fret. Just recognize that this is how GOOGLE wants it.

..

This wraps the set of XML elements (pair of opening and closing XML tags) for each URL you want to tell Google about.

YourUrl

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Here is where you put the URL to the webpage you want Google to know about. Try to avoid extra spaces.

monthly

This tells Google how often you expect there to be changes in a web page. It may be hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, or never. Be honest with your real expectations.

YYYY-MM-DD

This tells Google when you last modified your web page. This is a really important tag. (You can put the time in also if you feel the need to.)

##

This tells Google what you feel is the most important to crawl. These are relative numbers from 0.0 to 1.0, with 1.0 being the most important. The default value is 0.5 (even if you leave the tag out). **THIS HAS NO IMPACT ON PAGERANK!!!** This is just a relative weight for Google to crawl YOUR site. If you

have all of them at .9 it would be no different than all of them being .1

Look at it this way. If Google was super busy one day and had time to crawl only 3 pages in your site, which ones should it crawl? I would want them to crawl the three with the highest priority (to me) that have changed recently.

BUT I DON'T WANT TO USE XML

You can just provide a text document with the list of URL's. This will help Google find your pages, but will not help Google efficiently decide on what to spider. I would strongly encourage you to build an XML version of google sitemap.

BENEFITS OF USING THE XML VERSION:

1. Google can know what pages have changed and not have to re-crawl those pages that haven't changed.
2. If you have a lot of pages and Google doesn't have time to crawl all of your pages all right away, it will focus on the ones that changed according to your priority.
3. Google is your friend. If they want information on how to efficiently crawl your site give it to them.

WHAT TO SUBMIT?

You may submit a sitemap, or an index of your sitemaps. Either will do. Google has documentation on both. (Don't worry about the index yet. That is addressed at the end of this article.)

I BUILT ONE – NOW HOW DO I SUBMIT IT?

First TELL GOOGLE IT EXISTS

1. Upload your Sitemap to your site to the highest folder in your website.
2. Sign into Google Sitemaps with your Google Account. (Use this link: <https://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/login>)
3. Click on "Add a Sitemap" link.
4. Type the URL to your Sitemap location.

Congratulations! Google now knows about it!

Now tell Google whenever something changes. It will check this sitemap to see where the changes are.

Quick and Easy Way:

Type the following into the address section of your browser:

```
http://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/ping?sitemap=  
http://www.YourDomain.com/YourSitemap.xml
```

Of course, you should replace the YourDomain.com with your domain and YourSitemap.xml with your sitemap.

If you have a dynamically built site then you would want to automate this using screen scraping techniques.

HOW OFTEN TO SUBMIT?

Ideally, it should be submitted when changes are made. Personally, I would avoid doing so more than once per day. However, we will look to Google as they may provide further guidance on this. Search engines are our friends, and we should be respectful of abusing any service they provide or making them process things needlessly.

WILL THIS IMPROVE MY GOOGLE RANKING?

Google doesn't make any promises of this. This is mainly a way for Google to find your pages, and to efficiently know what pages need to be re-crawled on your website. If your site makes frequent changes, this feature helps Google to know about them more quickly. It won't have to spider through your whole site to find the changes.

HOW MANY URLs CAN I HAVE IN A GOOGLE SITEMAP?

According to Google documentation, you may have up to 50,000. If you anticipate more than this, then you should build several sitemaps and use a Google Sitemap Index. This Index will point to the several sitemaps. If you want more information on the Sitemap Index, go to:

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/docs/en/protocol.html#sitemapFileRequirements>

FOR more information, please refer to Google Documentation at
<http://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/docs/en/about.html>

Robert Fuess is a website designer, who focuses on developing SEO friendly, database-driven websites (such as shopping carts). If you are interested in a dynamic website that has a Google Sitemap automatically generated and submitted to Google, call me at (805) 720-0789 or email me at: <mailto:robert@spiderweblogic.com>.

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Get Listed In Google By Making An XML SiteMap and Without Spending A Dime.

By Richard D. Bailey

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If you have been unsuccessfully trying to get listed in Google or just hitting roadblocks when trying to get more of your pages listed in Google, then you need to read this short article. I am about to reveal a simple SEO secret that can save you a lot of time, money and effort.

Google has a preferred search submission format that it actually asks webmasters to use, It's called a Google SiteMap.

Admittedly, creating and using XML is no easy task for anyone who is non-technical or inexperienced with web coding, however there is a site or two on the web that can actually help you create an XML sitemap and then submit it to Google so that this venerable search engine can crawl your previously unknown web site and get you listed.

Of course there are no guarantees that your site will get high ranks or that it will meet Google's guidelines for inclusion, so be sure to make sure that your site is properly optimized and meets their guidelines before using these tools.

Before I reveal these tools and show you where to go to find out how to use them, let's take a look at

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the basics.

XML (Extensible Markup Language) is a special document formatted created to allow communication between applications and also between organizations. XML is a practical system that structurally defines the format and composition of intricate documents and data such as invoices, news feeds, inventory reports, catalog listings and other complex documents. A seasoned programmer who understands XML can easily create XML applications that know how to pull data from XML sources and then format it for presentation to end users.

In the case of Google, this same XML data format can be used to define your site's pages and their position in relation to each other. So for example, your "about_us.html" page is usually connected only one click away from your "index.html" page. When used in this manner to define pages and their positions we are creating what is commonly known as a sitemap.

Google says in the own words, "Google Sitemaps is an easy way for you to help improve your coverage in the Google index. It's a collaborative crawling system that enables you to communicate directly with Google to keep us informed of all your web pages, and when you make changes to these pages."

So in essence, Google is asking us to help them index the web by using this simple technique that will no doubt become a major help to struggling webmasters everywhere.

Google, by the way, will accept simple text file based sitemaps. Please consult their site for more information.

How to get your sitemap indexed.

Once your sitemap has been created and uploaded to the main directory of your web site, simply use this URL to submit it:

www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/ping?sitemap=sitemap_url

Just replace the parameter, "sitemap_url" with the actual URL of your sitemap. Example:

[www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/ping?sitemap= http://www.mywebsiteabc.com/sitemap.xml](http://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/ping?sitemap=http://www.mywebsiteabc.com/sitemap.xml)

You can also open a Google account before submitting to make sure that you can actually track your submission to check your sitemap status.

<https://www.google.com/accounts/NewAccount>

I promised to reveal the tools used to facilitate the creation of XML sitemaps and here they are...

The Tools Revealed:

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SiteMapspal:

Use this Google recommended online tool to generate a Google friendly xml sitemap that you can simple cut/paste and then upload to your site. Simply provide your site URL and select a few optional settings and with one-click ease you will have a sitemap, ready to go.

<http://www.sitemapsal.com/>

Google SiteMap Generator:

Provided by Google themselves, this is not for the faint of heart, it requires some knowledge of working with Python scripts (a web coding format) and will requires installation on your site.

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/docs/en/sitemap-generator.html>

SiteMap Validator:

Use this Google recommended tool to validate your sitemap for accuracy.

<http://www.smart-it-consulting.com/internet/google/submit-validate-sitemap/>

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